

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

The Correspondence of James Tate and
Eugene DeGruson, 1962-1983

Axe Collections of Freethought, Socialism,
Radicalism, and Anarchy

2016-11-15

Letter 1967, April 30, James Tate to Gene DeGruson

James Tate

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/tate>

Recommended Citation

Tate, James, "Letter 1967, April 30, James Tate to Gene DeGruson" (2016). *The Correspondence of James Tate and Eugene DeGruson, 1962-1983*. 6.

<https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/tate/6>

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Axe Collections of Freethought, Socialism, Radicalism, and Anarchy at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Correspondence of James Tate and Eugene DeGruson, 1962-1983 by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact mmccune@pittstate.edu, jmauk@pittstate.edu.

April 30, 1967

Dear Gene--

We exchange so many notes and so few real letters! But I am thankful for each poem and postcard I receive from you. I do wish / hope you find time to comment on my sheaflet of poems; it's not fair of me to say that, but I am anxious to get your response for a number of reasons. I know they are not, perhaps, as immediately "likeable" as the best in the book, but I think they do show I am struggling to not be content with what I have done, repeating. And I think in many ways they are more serious. I only hope they aren't "obscure" or "exclusive". Anyway, if you find time, please give me your most honest reaction: which is not to say that I will consider it honest only if it is harsh, by any means. If you happen to like them, or a few, please tell me because this kind of criticism can be as helpful or more helpful than the man who can only tell what is lacking or wrong. Like fking M. L. Rosenthal: that was the ~~worst~~ most unsympathetic, fraudulent review I ever hope to read about myself. The bastard.

Well, so much for that. News! I may take a job afterall, after all this bitching about the university. Berkeley! Yes, it's true. I don't know how I would 'fit in' or like it, but they have made me a handsome offer and it is not going to be easy to turn down; I should know definitely within the week. I think San Francisco could be healthy for me for a year; I've never been there.

Also: I would like your opinion on a publishing matter. The truth is I damned near have a second manuscript. But I don't want to rush in to things just because I have had invitations from two major houses. I think it might be a mistake to publish a second book so soon, I don't know how those things work too well, they're so mystical, I mean reviewers, etc. So I just may publish a limited edition of maybe 25 poems, approx $\frac{1}{2}$ a manuscript, with a small quality press here--Stone Wall Press, which prints the most gorgeous books I've ever seen. He could possibly do it by, say, Christmas. He had my first manuscript when Yale accepted it, and says he would be very happy to do this. Should I? I don't see what not; I could, of course, include the poems in my next volume from a big house. Or should I just go ahead and negotiate with Harper & Row or Atlantic-Little Brown: they probably wouldn't bring it out for at least twelve months anyway. I don't know. Or care too much. Though I would like to get these out of my hair so that I may feel really free to move on to something else.

Your description of Snodgrass was nice. I think he is hiding out in Iowa City, or was--rumor had it at least. His Daughter was having mind troubles, and he wanted to be near her. He has a new book coming. I've been reading Heart's Needle today, and I can't really say I like it as much as many of my friends. The long poem, itself, rather bores me, so little 'imagination,' and technically I even think it's kind of bland, I know that is not popular opinion though.

The Haldeman library sounds exciting. Hopefully I will get to Pittsburg this summer for a more relaxed visit and will have time to rumage through some of the new acquisitions.

I hear Gerald Warren intends to move to Iowa City soon, like this weekend. God save me! I do like him, but he can be an awful bore; nothing occupies his mind but the plight of Gerald Warren. Bleak.

I am delivering a 35 page paper on Paterson Wednesday, and so have been re-reading everything, including prose, fiction, essays and all the poetry. What fun! I don't know that I have anything startling to say, but I certainly haven't found anything 'startling' written about it. Roy Harvey Pearse's "The Continuity of American Poetry" is a rather pedestrian book. I talked to Homer Brown last night and he recommended J. Hillis Miller's "Poets of Reality," so I'm looking for that.

Sold "Rape in the Engineering Building" to the Atlantic Yesterday!

On the 'Loving Vishnu. . . ' poem: I don't think you need those first three lines. Begin with "fragile--loose-tongued. . . " and I like it very much, "memory/lipping at the edge of mind/ while we lie here" is very powerful. I read the poem many times, not liking it and not knowing why until I just put my hand over those first three lines--Loving Vishnu really doesn't have that much to do with it; it makes it 'literary' when it is much more than that actually.

'Point of View' is good considering the assignment. It is charming--a bad word!--is the way Stafford is when he is right. Things I don't like: general form. . . General's form. ????? We all have to do that occasionally I guess. Compulsive absurdity. Wow! Anyway, it is really good to see you writing so much. I think it's a terrifically healthy sign that you are becoming interested in Yourself, and not letting Pburg drain off all the best of you.

THE PRESIDENT SLUMMING

In a weird, forlorn voice
he cries: it is a mirage!
Then tosses a wreath of scorpions
to the children,
mounts his white nag
and creeps off into darkness,
smoking an orange.

Love,



Jim Tate
P. O. Box 133
Iowa City, Iowa



Eugene DeGruson
1805 N. Broadway
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

Air Mail